

The PEOPLE call'd

4/15/12

QUAKERS



Truly Represented,

AND

Whitehead (G.)

Vindicated from some Mistakes

IN THE

REPRESENTATION

OF THE

Lower House of Convocation.

WITH

A Brief ENQUIRY into a Persecuting Pamphlet, lately deliver'd to the Members of Parliament, stiled, *A Winding-Sheet for Quakerism*; unjustly design'd against the said People, and the Toleration.

*The Wicked in his Pride doth persecute the Poor, &c. Psal. 10. 2.
He shall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath shewed no Mercy, &c.
James 2. 13. by G. Whitehead*

L O N D O N.

Printed and Sold by Philip Gwillim in Austin-Fryars,
near the Royal Exchange, 1712.

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Unto all which we sincerely and humbly Answer:

THE People call'd QUAKERS

TRULY REPRESENTED,

And Vindicated from some Mistakes,

Wherein they are Misrepresented in

The Representation of the Lower House of Convocation.

PART I.

SEEING 'tis not unknown, that we (the said People) profess Faith in God the Father, and in his dear Eternal Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, One God blessed for evermore; and that we do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine Inspiration, according as express in the Act of Exemption or Toleration, *Anno primo Gulielmi & Mariae*, which being Legally Provided, and by us Sincerely and Publickly Owned to Authority, and one Condition of our Present and Religious Liberty: We think it very hard and undue Measure, as well as Uncharitable, to be joyned either with Socinians or Arians, and branded with Infidelity, Damnable Errors, which you say have been Imbraced and Propagated by the Sect of Quakers, whom (you say) in several of their Treatises, Catechisms and Primers, have taught the Rudiments of Christian Faith, in such a manner, as to make it seem to be little more than a Complicated System of Deism and Enthusiasm; To which is added, From the wicked Principles thus disseminated, as wicked Practices have followed.

A 2

Unto

Unto all which we sincerely and humbly Answer :

I. We know nothing, in point of Christian Doctrine and Principle, more openly and apparently Asserted and Propagated, by the said People call'd *Quakers*, than the Divinity of Christ, and Essential Union of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This Holy and Blessed Scripture-Trinity we have always stood for, in real Faith and Practice.

II. The Divinity of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that he is the Eternal Word, the true God, as well as truly Man; being expressly agreeable to Holy Scripture-Testimony, viz. ^a *That he is the Mighty God, &c.* ^b *The Eternal Word, whereby all Things were made.* ^c *Who is over all, God blessed for ever.* ^d *God created all things by Jesus Christ.* ^e *Who is the true God, and Eternal Life; by whom also the World's were made.* The Divine ^f *Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One.*

The Blessed Trinity in the Unity of Divine Essence is manifest in the wonderful Works of God, both in the Old and New Creation, and the Mystery thereof revealed, and experienced in the New Birth.

III. Thus we sincerely Believe and Confess the Divinity and Deity of the Eternal Son of God, Christ Jesus, with respect to his being the *Eternal Word, which was in the Beginning; Before Abraham was; From Everlasting; Glorified with the Father before the World began: And in respect to the Fulness of the Godhead (yea, all Fulness) dwelling in Him; and as All Power in Heaven and Earth is given unto him: And as By whom also God made the Worlds.* All which seriously consider'd, thus to assert the Glorious Divinity of the Son of God, cannot be inconsistent with his Divine Wisdom, Love, and great Condescension, in Assuming the Holy Humanity, his pure and perfect Manhood, for our sakes, even for the Redemption of Mankind.

Mankind. *Without Controversie, great is the Mystery of Godliness, (saith the Apostle, 1 Tim. 3. 16.) God was manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, &c. And surely Excellent is the Mystery of Christ, and the true Spiritual Knowledge of Him, and his Riches unsearchable. Ephes. 3. 4, to ver. 9. 2 Cor. 5. 16. Col. 1. 27.*

IV. The Immortality of the Soul of Man, and the true Notions and Distinctions of Good and Evil, together with the just Judgments, and suitable Rewards, whether in this or the next Life, We never deemed Groundless or Vain, as the *Ranters, Corrupt Libertines, and Atheists* have done and do: But constantly Believe and Assert the Righteousness of God, in Justifying the Righteous, and Condemning the Wicked. *For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. 5. 10.*

V. As to *Infidelity, and Damnable Errors, &c.* charged upon the *Quakers*: As we are not Conscious to our selves thereof, we do not find any colour of Proof, nor whence they originally arose; except from some persecuting Adversaries, bitter Invectives, or Pamphlets of some Apostates (who are gone out from us into Enmity) and dissembling Conformists, to Ingratiate themselves into Favour and Credit with the Church of *England*, by Perverting our Principles, and Calumniating Us and our Christian Religion and Society. And we know no *Catechisms* or *Primers*, owned or promoted among us, about the Rules of the Christian Faith, but such as are agreeable to Holy Scripture: Witness *Robert Barclay's* Catechism, and the Christian Testimonies and Answers of divers other approved *Authors* among us, wherein the forementioned Doctrines and Principles of the Christian Faith are sincerely Asserted. Although we have been greatly Misrepresented by some of our Adversaries *false and fictitious Catechisms* (in our Names) *mock Dialogues* and *Tryals*, and *silly idle Romances, &c.*

VI. Our Imbracing and Confessing *Christ Jesus*, as the *True Light*, which inlightens Mankind, and the *Inspiration* and *Guidance* of the Holy Spirit, under the New Covenant Dispensation,

tion, has been by some Ignorant and Antichristian Spirits, in Contempt, render'd *Deism* and *Enthusiasm*, though the same be often pray'd for, and confess'd in the *Liturgy* of the Church of *England*. And we hope our Imbracing those Christian Principles; namely, that of the *True Light*, John 1. *Divine Inspiration*, and being led by the Spirit of God, John 16. 13. Rom. 8. 14. will not produce any Wicked Practices, as Dissolute Behaviour, Oathes, Imprecations, growth of Immorality, Prophaness, (*Drunkenness* and *Lewdness*, &c.) all which are utter Abominations to our Religious and Christian Principles and Society: And therefore ought not to be imputed to Us, or our Profession, as any Cause thereof. But 'tis rather feared, That the Ignorance, Libertinism, and Debauchery of too many of the *Priests* in this Nation, have in a great measure contributed thereunto; together with the former Books, allowing Sports and Pastimes on the *Sabbath Day*.

VII. 'Tis very sad and lamentable, that *Infidelity*, *Libertinism* and *Scepticism* should so much abound and prevail in any Church professing *Christianity*, as in this Nation, where so much of Religion and Holiness of Profession and Conversation are pretended. But Peoples Fruits must show, whose Plants, and what Trees they are.

VIII. We believe as you say, and 'tis matter of Sorrow and Grief of Heart, That one Fountain, from whence the Corruptions of Religion and Morality have flowed, is on your Theaters; and that things Sacred and Serious have been handled after the most Ludicrous manner, &c. And that on them Obscenity, Blasphemous Allusions to Holy Writ, and various sorts of Prophaness, have abounded, &c. And that the vicious Images, painted to the Life, have made such Impressions on the Minds of the Young and Unwary, as are not easy to be defaced.

And the like Account is given by the Upper House, in their Representation, viz. That this Prophaness hath been much increased by the Licentiousness of the Stage, where the worst Examples have been—Recommended to Imitation. And further, they propose to the Queen, viz. We entertain not the least Doubt of your Majesty's firm Resolution, to render the Laws and Proclamations, set forth for the suppression of Immorality and Prophaness, useful to that purpose, by

by an impartial and vigorous Execution of them, and to reform the Corruptions of the Stage, which have been so instrumental in viciating Young and Innocent Minds, and given so just Offence to all Serious and Devout Christians.

We heartily wish, that what both your Houses have propos'd, in this Case last mentioned, may be truly pursu'd; so as the Government may be prevail'd upon, totally to suppress, remove, and prohibit those Stage-Plays, and the Actors of them, seeing they are of so Irreligious and Impious Tendency, and cause of ridiculing true Religion, and debauching Youth. We are perswaded they are greatly Offensive to God, and Injurious to many poor Souls: And we think it behoves you to enquire, if some of your Priests do not resort to those Play-houses, especially of the Younger sort, as is reported; and how Culpable such are, if they do. And whether it be not a great Dishonour to your Profession and Function, for any of them to take the Severest, most Chargeable, and Ruinous Courses, in prosecuting divers of our Friends for small Tithes, as unto Imprisonments, Sequestrations, &c. seeing they have a more easie way to recover them by late Laws? Is not this severe Course, rather an Indication of Revenge, than of Christianity or Humanity? And we think you cannot reasonably suppose, that such Unmercifulness and Oppressions will any ways rebound, or tend to the Honour of your Religion, Church or Profession.

About *Restraining the Press*, so much press'd, there had need to be a just and equal Care, that it be not put into the Power of any one Party, to Judge, Stop, or License Books, as they please; for therein may be great Partiality and Injustice, in permitting only Books of their own Party, if they relate to their Religious Persuasions, and stopping all others; and then many that may be unjustly Defamed, and grossly Calumniated, and their Principles perverted (as many have been served) by scandalous Pamphlets, fictitious Romances, and false Dialogues, and yet not suffer'd to Answer in defence of themselves; which would be very unfair, partial, and unjust, if the Press should be restrain'd only to a Party. Yet it's very meet it should be so far restrain'd, as not to be suffer'd to print either Seditious News, or Pamphlets against the Government, or tending to introduce

introduce or promote Vice, Immorality, Impiety, or Profaneness; and that all Licentious Obscene Books and Pamphlets, tending to deprave and viciate Youth, be stop'd and suppress'd.

To conclude, The Premisses seriously consider'd, We pray you be more Charitable in your Judgment towards us, and do as you would be done by; and not ready to credit or receive Reproaches or Calumnies against us, the said People, from Invidious Incendiaries, tending to raise Persecution; for that would not tend to the Glory of God, your Honour, or inward Peace.

We humbly hope, the Queen of *Great Britain* (whom God preserve) is better Principled, and more Just, than to pre-judge us upon Injurious Misrepresentations, or to receive Evil Reports, or Aspersions against us, who are Her Peaceable Protestant Subjects.

G. Whitehead,
W. Mead.

A Brief ENQUIRY upon an Invidious Book, or Pamphlet, stiled, *A Winding-Sheet for Quakerism*; lately deliver'd to the Members of Parliament; and also said to be, *A brief Enquiry into the Toleration of the Quakers*; By Edw. Cockson, who stiles himself *M. A. Rector of Westcot-Barton in the County of Oxon.*

Together with a few Queries, Proposed to the Lower House of Convocation, relating to the said Book, seriously to Consider of.

PART II.

WHEREAS the Design and Scope of the said pretended *Winding-Sheet* appears to be against the *Toleration*, and to have the same taken away, especially from the People call'd *Quakers* in the first place, as being the principal Objects of his Envy and Fury: The meaning thereof, is, to take away the Liberty of their Conscience, respecting their Religious Exercise in the Worship of God in their solemn Assemblies, Legally Tolerated; which to deprive them of, would tend either to make them *Atheists*, or *Hypocritical Conformists*; or rather (if that cannot be effected) to expose them to all such Severities, Penalties and Persecutions, as formerly they suffer'd deeply under: And not only so, but the same Legal Severities, and Sanguinary Punishments, as under the Law of *Moses* were provided against *Blasphemers of the Name of God*, *false Prophets*, and other high Offenders, are urg'd and apply'd against the said People, and as being still in force under the Gospel-Administration, p. 6. As if nothing would satisfy his Fury, short of the utter De-

struction of the said People. And for what Cause alledged or pretended by him? Even for no less than *Hereses* and *Blasphemies*. O sad! And what are those chiefly, viz.

1. First, *That the Professors of Quakerism prefer Heathenism to true Christianity*, p. 3.

Ans. That were a sad Error and Heresie indeed, to prefer *Heathenism* to *true Christianity*, if we may take *Heathenism* to be *Idolatri* and *Impiety*, as truly it is. But it is a gross Falshood and Perversion against the People called *Quakers*, and not deducible from their Writings, if justly quoted. For herein the Man puts no difference between *Heathenism*, and the *Gentile Divinity* professed, together with the *Piety* and *Morality* practised by many of them *Philosophers* and others; both which the *Quakers* have commended, but not preferred to *true Christianity*, but as agreeable thereto, and included therein, against all false Christians and Hypocrites, under the Profession of *Christianity*, perverted and abused by their Sin-pleasing and Sinners-indulging Doctrines and corrupt Conversations, who argue for Continuance of Sin term of Life, contrary to the *Divinity*, *Piety* and *Christianity* found in divers *Heathen Writers*. This is the true State of the *Quakers* Case, in the point.

2. *As for us of the Church of England, their Spite against us is most Superlative*, p. 3.

Ans. This is a great Mistake: We do not hate any of their Persons; no, not the *Priests*, but their corrupt Practices, Covetousness, Envy, Pride, Persecution, where found among them, who Persecute and Imprison our Friends, and many times take away their Goods, to great Excess; sometimes for a small Value claim'd.

3. *That their Great Robert Barclay adviseth to have our Glebes and Tithes taken from us, and to put them into the Publick Treasury for the Payment of Taxes; and declares, that this is the only way soundly to reform us*, p. 4. Apol. p. 340.

Ans. A sad Complaint! How hard wou'd this pinch Mercenary Preachers? Yet we hope it will not prove us *Hereticks*, or guilty of *Heresie*; no more than *Christ's Ministers* were, in Preaching the Gospel freely, as they had freely received, and were commanded by him.

And the Apostle *Paul* was so much of R. B's Mind, as that

Tithes

Tithes and Oblations, or Offerings, were discontinued under the Gospel-Dispensation, as being ended by Christ Jesus, the One Offering; and the Priesthood (that took Tithes) changed from Levi to Christ, (who came of the Tribe of Judah, not of Levi.) And many of the Protestant Reformers and Martyrs were also of the same Judgment, against the Payment of Tithes under the Gospel and New Covenant Dispensation. And how strongly and clearly does the Apostle argue this Case, for Christ's ending the first Priesthood and Law, for Tithes and Offerings? Heb. 7, 8, 9, & 10 Chapters.

4. *On Heb. 10. 23, 28, 29. The whole place (saith the Rector) seems chiefly to have respect to such Hereticks as deny Christ Jesus, and the Efficacy of his Blood, as 'tis plain the Quakers do, (quoth he) p. 7.*

Ans. Where is it plain, that the Quakers deny Christ Jesus, and the Efficacy of his Blood? I am sure such Denial is expressly contrary to the Principle and Profession of the People call'd Quakers; and therefore this Adversary might have been horribly ashamed to rank the said People among Hereticks, upon such notorious Calumnies, thereby to render them incapable of the Toleration, and consequently to expose them to severe Persecutions and Ruin.

5. *About the Sacred Trinity (He saith) That the Quakers cannot, dare not honestly declare the same, in the same Sense the Compilers of the Act of Toleration understood the Words, viz. That God the Father is a distinct Person from Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Spirit; and that they are such a Three, as neither are nor can be more or less than Three, p. 11.*

Ans. We hope we are not justly chargeable with Heresie, for confessing the Blessed Trinity, or Divine Three, in Holy Scripture Terms, according as is declared in the said Act; namely, "That We (the said People) do profess Faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ his Eternal Son, and in the Holy Spirit, One God blessed for ever.

Though this Profession and Confession has given Satisfaction to the Civil Government, as being both Christian and Scriptural, yet it does not satisfy the said Rector, but he will needs make himself an Expositor of the Sense and Understanding of the Law-makers, p. 11. and would impose other Terms than the Law requires in the case. We think it very unfair and uncharitable,

to be deem'd Guilty of *Heresie*, for not confessing our Faith in Unscriptural Terms; while we confess the *Eternal Deity* in plain Scripture Terms, also allow'd of by Act of Parliament, as the *Father*, the *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*, (*Mat.* 28. 19. 1 *John* 5. 7.) and their Union in the Divine Essence.

Observe, *Edw. Cockson, M. A.* Rector (so called) (in order to have the People call'd *Quakers* punish'd) thus proceeds to Instances, viz.

Pag. 5. "God hath imprinted it in the Hearts of all Mankind, to vindicate his Honour, and to punish all that are under their Jurisdiction, who dishonour Him. Thus *Artaxerxes*, King of *Persia*, having granted to the *Jews* that were in his Dominions, that as many of them as pleas'd might return with *Ezra* to *Jerusalem*; He thereupon makes a Decree, for the Establishment of the true Worship of the true God, &c. And mark what follows; Whosoever will not do the Law of thy God, and the Law of the King, let Judgment be Executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto Death, or to Banishment, or to Confiscation of Goods, or to Imprisonment, *Ezra* 7. 13, 25, 26. And *Ezra* blessed God for this Decree, and put it in Execution accordingly, *Ezra* 10. 7, 8.

Whereupon I Query of the said Convocation, viz.

Q. 1. How can this Instance warrant or excuse Persecution against peaceable dissenting Protestants, either to Death, Banishment, Confiscation of Goods, or Imprisonment, for worshipping the true God, as perswaded in Conscience, tho' differing in Manner or Form from that which is National?

2. Did not the said King of *Persia* grant free Liberty of Conscience to the *Jews* to worship the God of Heaven, as 'twas imprinted in their Hearts, or they perswaded according to his Laws? Where was then any Compulsion to the contrary, so as to Enforce them to any National Worship of the *Persians*, or other Nations?

3. And was not *Artaxerxes* (King of *Persia*) both Charitable and Generous to *Israel*; in Granting them such Free Liberty, as that as many of them as were minded (of their own free will) should go up to *Jerusalem* with *Ezra*? Also affording them great Accommodation and Encouragement, *Ezra* 7. As also did *Cyrus*, King of *Persia*, before him, *Ch.* 1.

4. And

4. And did not the Lord God put it into the Hearts of these Great Kings, to grant this free Religious Liberty and Encouragement unto his People?

5. And did they not therein Excel all persecuting Kings and Emperors, and all such Priests as would incense Rulers to persecute us for our Religion and Conscience towards God?

6. But will nothing serve or please your Rector now, against the *Quakers*, but either the Penalty of *Death*, or *Banishment*, or *Confiscation of Goods*, or *Imprisonment*? These have been try'd already, in great measure, for their *Peaceable*, *Religious* and *Solemn Assemblies*; tho' the said King of *Persia* could never intend those Penalties against *Israel*, for their Religion or Worship, having so greatly encouraged them therein.

Rector, p. 6. "He only who was Supreme, was properly *Custor utriusque tabula*, to him was committed the Care to punish "Murderers, Adulterers, and Thieves, &c. and also Idolaters, "Blasphemers, false Prophets, &c. none of which he was to "tolerate, but to root them out of his Dominions, *Exod.* 22. "18, 20. *Deut.* 13. 1, 2, 3, 5. and 17. 2, to 8. and ver. 12. *Levit.* "24. 16. with many other places. Now that these Commands "are Obligatory to Christian Magistrates, under the Gospel Admini- "stration also, will appear; if we consider, 1st, That none of "them were ever revoked, repealed, or cancelled by Christ, or "any of his Apostles. 2^{dly}, *Ratio Immutabilis facit Præceptum Immutabile*, the very same Reasons for which these Command- "ments were at first given, remain still, and are as strong as "ever. Blasphemies, Idolatries, and false Prophecies are the "same Sins still, and God is the same God still, and hates these "Sins as much now as ever.

Whereupon I Enquire of the Convocation:

Q. 1. Are you of the same Judgment or Opinion with your Rector, that Blasphemers, and false Prophets, and false Teachers are to be stoned to Death by Christian Magistrates, under the Gospel Administration, as Blasphemers and false Prophets were under the Law of Moses, *Deut.* 13. quoted by the Rector? And must Gospel Ministers now be Judges in Cases of Life and Death, as Priests were then? *Deut.* 17. 9--12.

Rector, p. 7. "And God has the same Power to punish now as "ever: If therefore God hath at any time forbidden those Sins,

he

he forbids them still; and the *same Punishments* that by his
 "Command was once to be inflicted for them, are still to be
 "inflicted, till they are by him revoked, or alter'd; for where
 "the *same Causes* for the *same Punishments* are perpetual, there
 "the *same Punishments* ought to be perpetual also?

2. Note, Under the Administration of the Law of *Moses*, and
 Old Covenant, not only *false Prophets*, *Blasphemers* and *Idola-*
ters, &c. but also *Sabbath-breakers*, *Rebellious Sons to their Parents*,
 as *Drunkards*, *Riotous Persons*, *Whoremongers* and *Adulterers*, were
 to be stoned to Death, *Levit.* 20. 2. and *Ch.* 24. 14, 15. *Numb.* 15.
 35, 36. *Deut.* 13. 5, 10. and *Ch.* 17. 5. and *Ch.* 21. 21. and *Ch.* 22.
 21, 24.

3. Are you of the same Judgment with your Rector, in these
 Cases, that all such Offenders (as mentioned) should be *stoned*
to Death, under the Gospel Administration, by Christian Ma-
 gistrates?

4. And would it not affect, and somewhat thin your own
 Society, or Church, to have all *Whoremongers* and *Adulterers*,
Rebellious Sons and *False Teachers*, stoned to Death? And wou'd
 not that make sad and Bloody Work in the Land? Or wou'd
 that be the way to convert such Offenders, or send 'em to
 Heaven?

5. Has your Rector, in these Cases, preached like a Minister of
 Christ, of the Gospel, or New Testament?

6. Did our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ give Sentence against
 the *Woman taken in Adultery*, that she should be *stoned to Death*?
 Or rather did he not shew more Mercy to her, than her Ac-
 cusers and Prosecutors would have done, when he convicted
 and silenced them; and said unto her, *Hath no Man condemned*
thee? No, Lord, (said she.) *Neither do I condemn thee* (said he)
Go and sin no more, *John* 8. 3, to 11.

Rector, p. 7. "The New Testament is so far from Repealing
 "those Laws, (*i. e.* of the Old) that it rather more strongly
 "Enforces them. For the Apostle having exhorted us to *hold*
 "fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering, &c. *Heb.* 10. 23,
 "to 28. He adds ver. 28, 29. *He that despised Moses Law, died*
 "*without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses: Of how much sorer*
 "*Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy of, who hath*
 "*trod under foot the Son of God, &c.* The whole place seems
 "to

“to have respect to such *Hereticks* as deny Christ Jesus, and the Efficacy of his Blood, as 'tis plain the *Quakers* do, &c.

Q. 1. What *sorer Punishment* wou'd your Rector have inflicted upon the *Quakers*, than Death?

Note, But his Charge against the *Quakers* mentioned, is utterly false, and (he is a false Accuser and an unjust Judge therein) contrary to our Christian Principle, of our Love and Respect to our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and his precious Blood, &c.

2. But if we were guilty of *Error* or *Heresie*, in this or any other point of Christianity; were it not more Christian for your Rector (in a Gospel Spirit) to endeavour our Conviction and Conversion, by Holy Scripture, (on a true State of Matter of Fact) than to endeavour our Destruction, or to have us stoned to Death, or our Brains knock'd out? (We being really unwilling to be tenacious in any Error, if convicted thereof.) May we not say, From all such Cruel, Hard-hearted, and Unmerciful Men, Good Lord deliver us?

Rector, p. 7. *ibid.* “This very thing was prophesied of, even in *Gospel-Times*, that in those very Days false Prophets should be cut off, Zech. 13. 2, 3. And St. Peter makes false Prophets and false Teachers to be Equivalent, 2 Pet. 2. 1, &c.

Whereupon I Enquire of the Convocation:

Q. 1. Does your Judgment agree with your Rector's, concerning that Prophecy, Zech. 13. 2, 3. i. e. That the same was intended for Gospel-Times, or that under the New Testament, or Gospel Administration, false Prophets and false Teachers should be cut off by the Magistrate's Sword, or stoned to Death?

Note, Of false Prophets, mentioned Zech. 13. 2, 3. who were to be cut off, ver. 3. it is said, And when any shall yet Prophecy, his Father and his Mother that begat him, shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live, for thou speakest Lies in the Name of the Lord; and his Father and his Mother that begat him, shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

2. Must his Father and Mother then be his Executioners in the Gospel-Times, literally taken, as your Rector seems to carry the Text, Zech. 13. 2, 3. to have such as he deems false Prophets and Hereticks, &c. cut off, and put to Death? And if

by

by their Fathers and Mothers, what Bloody, Unnatural and Inhumane Work wou'd this make among profess'd Christians, for Parents to kill their own Children !

3. And where do you find any Texts in the New Testament, enforcing the Killing or Stoning to Death, either false Prophets, Blasphemers, or Hereticks ? but Admonition, Rejection, or leaving them to the Judgment of God, if obstinate and impenitent ; and giving open Warning to others against such, and their pernicious Doctrines, Practices, and Destruction, as the holy Apostles did, 2 Pet. 2. Chap. and Jude's Epistle, &c.

Seeing your said Rector E. C. appears so Zealous for the Law of Moses, and that of the King of Persia, Ezra 7. 26. to be Executed upon such as he judges *Hereticks, Blasphemers, false Prophets, false Teachers, and Idolaters, &c.*

I wou'd ask him, or any of you his Brethren, these Questions :

Q. 1. If you do not deem the *Papists* Hereticks, Idolaters and Blasphemers, in their Doctrine and Belief of *Transubstantiation*, their *Eucharist*, their *Sacrament* of the *Altar*, and Adoration given thereunto, as to Christ Jesus his Body and Blood ?

2. Would you have them cut off, or stoned to Death, who are of that Persuasion and Religion, or Profession with the Church of Rome, or only the *Quakers* ?

3. Would it be either Christian or Safe, for any, esteem'd *Protestant Ministers*, to follow *Papists Examples*, as to excite the Supreme Magistrate, or Civil Government, to cut off, or put to Death, those whom they think or judge *Hereticks, Blasphemers, Idolaters, &c.*

4. Does not the Church of Rome judge all, both You and Us, who dissent from that Church, to be *Hereticks* ? And what's the Consequence aim'd at thereby, but to cut off all such Dissenters, if such a persecuting Power should be permitted to prevail ? So that according to this Rector's Notion, may not *Protestants* cut off all *Papists*, and *Papists* cut off all *Protestants* ; and so all Professors of Christianity become extinct ?

5. Are not Persecutors apt to misapply those Laws intended against notorious Offenders, to condemn, punish and destroy the Innocent and the Righteous, as did the *Jews*, who stoned the Prophets, 2 Chron. 24. 21. Mat. 21. 35. and 23. 37. Luke 13. 34. And they took up Stones to stone Christ, falsely charging

charging him with *Blasphemy*, John 10. 31, 32, 33. and 11. 8. And they stoned *Stephen*, Acts 7. 58, 59. And they stoned *Paul*, for Preaching the Gospel of Christ Jesus, Acts 14. 19.

6. Can you reasonably suppose, it will be for the Honour of your Church, to allow of any of your Brethren, Rectors, Ministers or Members, to endeavour to incense the Government to severe Persecution, as this your Rector E. C. has done?

Altho' I have endeavour'd Brevity in this Enquiry, yet am concern'd, on a Retrospection, to add something farther.

WHEREAS the said Rector wou'd have the Supreme Magistrate not only the *Custos utriusque tabula*, (which is a high Undertaking) and the Care committed to him to punish Murtherers, Adulterers, and Thieves, &c. but also all Idolaters, Blasphemers, and false Prophets, so as not to tolerate any of them, but to root them out of his Dominions, p. 6.

Here he has cut out heavy Work for the Supreme Magistrate and Governours. But who must be Judge, and upon whose Evidence? If the Priest and Levite, (or invidious persecuting Rector) we may expect no Compassion, no Mercy, nor Justice from him, or them, who have prejudg'd and condemn'd Us and our Cause, without Proof, or any just or clear Evidence of Matter of Fact: As this our arbitrary Judge and Dictator has pass'd his Judgment and black Characters of Idolaters, Blasphemers, and false Prophets, even unto Banishment and Death, &c. aforehand; without any Judicial Tryal, or Gospel Administration, or Law thereof, for the Punishments assign'd by him; to make the Civil Magistrate rather a Breaker of the Two Tables, than *Custos utriusque tabula*. For this Adversary's Invectives do not tend to excite the Civil Magistrate either to Justice, or to that Love which is the Fulfilling and End of the Law, or Decalogue; but to extreme Severity and Persecution against his Neighbours: Which is far from loving his Neighbour as himself. It wou'd become him and his Brethren to be better Examples and Preachers in Spirit, Conversation and Doctrine, than any of them to be Incendiaries to Persecution, and Ruin of their Quiet Neighbours.

And whereas our persecuting Adversary wou'd have the same Severities inflicted (upon those he deems *Hereticks*, &c.) under the Gospel Administration, as were commanded to be inflicted under the Legal, upon Blasphemers, &c. Let's a little farther Examine his Proofs.

If *Rom. 13. 4.* be insisted upon, and thence inferr'd, that the *Magistrate should execute Wrath upon false Teachers, &c.* because he *bears not the Sword in vain*: Surely the holy Apostle did not intend, that the Magistrate, in the Gospel Day, should kill or cut off *false Teachers*, or cause them to be stoned to Death, who are mistaken in some Doctrine or Prophecy; but rather that they should be better persuaded, convinced and converted by sound Doctrine.

And in his Exhorting to be Subject to the Higher Powers, *Rom. 13. 1.* he could not mean, that the Christian Believers in Christ (then in *Rome* or elsewhere) should subject their Faith, Religion, Conscience, and Worship, to the Wills of *Heathen Emperors* at *Rome*, or to the Kings or Rulers of the Earth, who were of different Religions; for then there should have been no Persecutions, no Martyrs of Jesus Christ, under the *Romish Emperors*, or others (as there were:) If their Subjection had been such, they must only have been of the Ruler's Religion, whether *Idolater, Papist, Mahometan, &c.* 'Tis no Christian Argument therefore to strain the Text, *Rom. 13.* to such an Uncertain, Unchristian, and (I may say) Irreligious Subjection; and not that of true Christians, and Martyrs of Jesus, who rather subjected to deep Sufferings, than to violate their Conscience, or Christian Religion.

4. The Punishment (mentioned *Heb. 10. 28, 29.*) of such Adversaries, rebellious and harden'd Apostates, and Contemners of Christ, and the Blood of his Covenant, appears not to be intended of such-like Temporal Punishment, or Death by the Magistrate, as that was to him that despised *Moses* his Law (under that Dispensation) but rather *Divine Vengeance*, or *Fiery Indignation from God*, to devour such *Adversaries*, and wilful Contemners of the Truth. See *Heb. 10.*

Certainly if any Persons do so backslide, and become such wilful Sinners, and Adversaries against Christ, and his Gospel Dispensation, after they have received the Knowledge of the Truth, they do not only lose and forfeit the blessed Effects and Benefits of Christ's Sacrifice, Blood and Atonement, but do incur much heavier and forer Punishment from the Hand of God (as Judge) than that of a Temporal Death to the Despisers of *Moses* Law.

Our God is (and will be) a consuming Fire to his Adversaries and

and Enemies, who continue in Rebellion against him, his Light, Truth, and Spirit of Grace, doing despight thereunto: And it is (and will be) a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God; when there remains no more a Sacrifice for Sin, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, to devour the Adversaries.

5. But now, as we profess Christianity, and the Dispensation of Christ, and of the New Covenant of Mercy and Grace, &c. Let us consider what Punishments did ever *Christ* or his *Gospel-Ministers* assign, or excite the Civil Magistrates unto, against Persons in Error or *Herese*? Did they tell them, they must banish 'em, or hang 'em, or burn 'em, or stone 'em to Death? I think not. I find no such Precept in the *New Testament*.

The *Sadduces*, who believed no *Resurrection*, neither *Angel* nor *Spirit* (*Mat.* 22. 23. *Acts* 23. 8. *Mark* 12. 18. *Luke* 20. 27.) Did *Christ* deliver them into the Hands of the Magistrates, to punish 'em (or stone 'em to Death) according to the Law of *Moses*? No sure. He rather told them, *Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God*; and taught 'em better, to convince 'em of their Error, and to persuade 'em out of it.

And the Man that was an *Heretick*, what Punishment did the holy Apostle assign, or direct against him? But after once or twice Admonition, to reject him?

And to have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darknes, but rather to reprove them.

And as *Magistracy*, or the Civil Government, we freely acknowledge to be *God's Ordinance*, appointed for the Punishment of Evil-doers, and the Praise of them that do well; so they that undertake that Office and Trust upon them, had need to be careful, that they don't condemn the Innocent, and acquit the Guilty; and that they be tender of Men's Lives, Liberties and Properties, especially where no overt Act, demeriting such Penalties, can be proved. And also that they be careful not to condemn Persons upon Reports and Defamations of invidious or mercenary Informers; as *Saul*, upon the Report of *Doeg the Edomite*, caused Fourscore and Five of the Lord's Priests then to be slain, even by the mischievous *Edomite*, when *Saul's* own Servants or Footmen would not do it, *1 Sam.* 22. 18.

He that ruleth over Men must be just, Ruling in the Fear of God: And he shall be as the Light of the Morning, when the Sun riseth,
even

even a Morning without Clouds; as the tender Grass springing out of the Earth by clear shining after Rain, 2 Sam. 23. 3, 4. So that the just Ruler in the Fear of God, must have a clear Understanding and Judgment, in the Fear of God, and his Light, therein to shine in Justice, Righteousness, Mercy and Truth; which will be to the great Comfort and Refreshment of the Righteous, and tender in Heart, who truly fear God.

'Tis Mercy and Truth whereby the King's Throne is established; without which, Thrones are tottering, shaken, and soon overturn'd. And therefore all Men in Power and Authority should diligently mind God's Power and Wisdom, whereby they may Stand and Rule in Righteousness. For saith that Wisdom, *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice: By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth*, Prov. 8. 15, 16.

'Tis not because they are made *Kings or Princes*, that they Reign and Rule, and decree Justice, and are Established; but because they are under Wisdom's Conduct, who are just Men, and Rulers fearing God, before whom they must appear, and be accountable to him, as their Judge, who is *the Righteous Judge of all*.

To conclude, If any should suppose, that I have reflected too hardly upon our Adversary the Rector (which may affect others of his Function) I may sincerely tell them:

1. I never met with any persecuting Adversary, that has written more Invidiously to incense the Government to extreme Persecution against us, &c. than he has done, as appears to me and many others.

2. I have not at all design'd to cast his Offence upon any others of his Function, or Priesthood, who are not guilty of the same, or like Offence, nor Countenancers or Approvers thereof; as I believe many of 'em are not, but of a better Principle, Nature and Temper, than to endeavour for to raise Persecution, to Ruin their honest peaceable Neighbours, for Religion and Conscience: As the Difference is apparent, by the several Persecutions our Friends meet withal from some of the Clergy, and the Moderation of others.

I pray God, in Mercy, humble and subjeet all to his Wisdom and Conduct, by his Divine Power.

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G. W.